Book: OPSS
Section: Section J: Student
Title: Student Absences and Excuses
Number: JED

Student Absences and Excuses

The Board acknowledges that student absences from school for any reason, whether excused or unexcused, take away from instructional time and have an adverse effect on student learning.

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In many cases, irregular attendance is the major reason for poor schoolwork; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours.

Reasons for which students may be excused include, but are not limited to:

1. personal illness of the student;

2. illness in the student's family necessitating the presence of the child;

3. quarantine for contagious disease;

4. emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, which may include but not be limited to absences due to documented medical, behavioral or dental appointments;

5. needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians for a limited period of time when approved in advance by the Superintendent (applies to students over 14 years of age only when all statutory obligations have been met for such excusal);

6. death in the family (applies to absences of up to 18 school hours unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence);

7. up to three religious expression days per school year in accordance with Ohio Revised Code 3320.04;

8. traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours);

9. post-secondary visitation, for which a student may be marked as "present" for such absences for up to

three days per school year;

10. pre-enlistment reporting to a military enlistment processing station, for which a student may be marked as "present" if the absence is used to help fulfill graduation requirements;

11. absences of a student of a military family for purposes of visiting their parent, legal guardian or custodian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services that has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting;

12. absences due to a student's placement in foster care or change in foster care placement or any court proceedings related to their foster care status;

13. absences due to a student being homeless;

14. attending a driver education course outside of core curriculum (applies to absences for two hours per day up to eight hours maximum, which cannot exceed four consecutive days or can be nonconsecutive) or

15. as determined by the Superintendent.

The District makes an attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student who has not notified the school of the student's absence that day regarding that student's absence without legitimate excuse within 120 minutes of the start of the school day. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to determine and use the appropriate notification procedure and methods consistent with State law.

Student make-up work for religious expression days is managed in accordance with State law and Board policy for such absences.

A student cannot be suspended, expelled or removed from school solely because of unexcused absences.

Each student who is absent for reasons other than religious expression days must immediately, upon return to school, make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to make up work missed. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may, or may not, be permitted to make up work. Each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students who are absent due to an in-school or out-of-school suspension are permitted to make up missed classroom assignments in accordance with District level policies and procedures. Students are requested to bring a note to school after each absence explaining the reason for the absence or tardiness in accordance with procedures and timelines defined in District level policies and procedures.

The Board does not believe that students should be excused from school for vacations or other nonemergency trips. The responsibility for such absences resides with the parent(s), and they must not expect any work missed by their child to be retaught by the teacher. If the school is notified in advance of such a trip, reasonable efforts are made to prepare a general list of assignments for the student to do while he/she is absent.

Interventions and Supports

A chronically absent student is a student who misses at least 10% of the minimum number of hours required in a school year under Ohio Revised Code (RC) 3313.48 for the school a student attends.

The District consults with the county juvenile court, parents, guardians and other persons having care of a student attending school in the District in developing this policy.

This policy and any procedures developed must align with any District or school improvement plan developed pursuant to State or Federal Law.

The Board may consult or partner with private, public and nonprofit agencies to assist students and families in reducing absences.

Prevention strategies

The Board directs the administration to implement the following strategies, when deemed appropriate to prevent students from becoming chronically absent:*(this list can and should be customized to reflect District practice and align with District plans to meet District needs):*

1. Universal Screening: District and building teams regularly review attendance data alongside other student data using an early warning system to identify areas of need early on, allowing for timely interventions

2. Data-Based Decision-Making: Collecting, analyzing, and using various forms of data to inform student needs and allocate resources to ensure decisions are grounded in evidence and tailored to the specific needs of students

3. Progress Monitoring: Ongoing and frequent collection of data to assess student performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and supports in order to adjust strategies to better support students and improve attendance

4. Team-Based Problem Solving: A collaborative, responsive, and systemic process for understanding and addressing complex problems impacting students through personalized outreach to students and families, intentional engagement strategies, and ongoing process monitoring

5. Shared Leadership: A collaborative approach to providing strong, ongoing leadership for implementing an integrated multi-tiered system of supports, including infrastructure, professional development, and monitoring to ensure that staff have the skills and support to create strong foundations for learning

6. Professional Capacity: Ensuring staff members are knowledgeable, organized, and equipped to deliver effective instruction using an integrated multi-tiered system of supports

7. Communication and Collaboration: Essential processes to promote and support engagement and shared responsibility for creating conditions for effective instruction for all students through a strengths-based lens among all teaching and non-teaching staff, administrators, families, caregivers, and students

Notifications

The District notifies a student's parent, guardian or custodian when the student has been absent from school for _____% *(Board must determine number of hours, not to exceed 5% of minimum required hours under RC 3313.48)* of the minimum number of hours required in a school year under RC 3313.48 for the school a student attends.

Tiered supports

The Board directs the administration to implement a tiered system that provides more intensive interventions and supports for students with greater numbers of absences and includes resources to help students and their families address the root causes of the absences.

Evidence-based academic and non-academic instruction and supports are organized across three tiers:*(can and should be customized to reflect District practice and meet District needs):*

1. Core: Universal attendance messaging and engagement practices provided to all students and families to establish the expectation of daily attendance;

2. Targeted: Early intervention for students who miss 5% - 19% of instructional time. The Board requires schools to begin communication and supportive outreach as soon as absence patterns indicate a concern which can be missing just 2-3 days per month;

3. Intensive: Individualized supports provided to students missing 20% or more of instructional time.

Absence intervention team

The District establishes at least one absence intervention team to work with students at risk of becoming chronically absent and their families to improve attendance at school.

Legal References
ORC 3313.48
ORC 3313.609
ORC 3313.66
ORC 3320.04
ORC 3321.01

ORC 3321.03
ORC 3321.04
ORC 3321.043
ORC 3321.13
ORC 3321.14
ORC 3321.141
ORC 3321.19
ORC 3321.191
ORC 3321.38
OAC 3301-69-02

Cross References
IGAC - Teaching About Religion
IKB - Homework
JEDB - Student Dismissal Precautions
JEE - Student Attendance Accounting (Missing and Absent Children)
JHC - Student Health Services and Requirements
JHCC - Communicable Diseases

NOTE: *Boards should ensure that policies and procedures clearly reflect reasons for which a student's absence is deemed excused. Districts should review the reasons outline in Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 3301-69-02 when making these determinations. This policy can be further customized to reflect these determinations. OAC 3301-69-02(B)(2)(m) authorizes a district to excuse a student for "any additional reason stated in a policy adopted by the local school board of education." Districts that want to add additional reasons should clearly state them within this policy.*

House Bill (HB) 96 (2025) made significant changes to District requirements for managing chronic absenteeism and truancy. Districts are required to adopt a compliant policy by Aug. 1, 2026, that must be developed in consultation with the juvenile court of the county or counties in which the District is located, parents, guardians or other persons having care of the students attending school in the District. The bill also allows districts not to file a complaint with the juvenile court against a habitually truant student if the District determines that satisfactory progress has been made toward improving attendance. HB 96 also added an allowance for high school students to be excused from attendance to attend a private driver training course for no more than two hours a day, up to a maximum of eight hours. This training can be no more than four consecutive days or can be nonconsecutive.

HB 166 added a requirement that districts will attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student regarding that student's absence without legitimate excuse within 120 minutes of the start of the school day using a method consistent with State law. The following methods are acceptable:

- *A telephone call placed in-person*
- *An automated telephone call (via a system that includes verification that each call was actually placed)*

- *A notification sent through the school's automated student information system*
- *A text message*
- *An email*
- *An in-person visit*
- *Any other notification procedure that has been adopted by resolution of the Board of Education*

Schools are not required to notify a parent who notifies the school of the student's absence within the first 120 minutes after the beginning of the school day. In addition, an immunity provision is included in the new law, which states that a school district or any officer, director, employee or any member of the District Board of Education is not liable in a civil action for injury, death or loss to person or property from an employee's action or inaction in good faith compliance with the law.

HB 491 requires boards to adopt a policy establishing parameters for completing and grading assignments missed due to a student's suspension. The policy must permit the completion of classroom assignments missed and students must receive at least partial credit for completed assignments. The policy may permit grade reductions and must prohibit the receipt of a failing grade solely on account of the student's suspension. Districts may further customize this policy to reflect parameters or outline in detail in student handbooks.

THIS IS A REQUIRED POLICY

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ORC 3321.01
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